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Subject Canyon cleanup plan wins support

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Canyon cleanup plan wins support

UPCM presents its blueprint for the work

By Jay Hamburger, OF THE RECORD STAFF

During an open house at the Empire Canyon Day Lodge at Deer Valley Resort, several people from the area said they were happy with the plans.

"I think, eventually, when it's all completed, it will be a nicer hiking and biking area. We won't have all the trash in the canyon . . . That bothers a lot of people, said Strike Fongellaz, a Daly Avenue resident who attended.

She supports the cleanup but said she was concerned about trucks using Daly Avenue, which dead-ends at one of the main routes into Empire Canyon.

"I'm all in favor with the process and the cleanup, she said.

Fongellaz also praised UPCM's work.

"I think it's great Park City Mines has taken the initiative to do this, she said.

Chris Hudon, a Silver Springs resident, said he hopes the cleanup ensures that drinking-water quality is acceptable.

"When you turn on your faucet, you assume you're getting healthy water. That may not be the case, he said, adding, "I'm just hoping they spend the money and follow through on the cleanup so public health is protected.

The open house was part of the EPA's ongoing efforts to ensure that the Silver Creek watershed is safe. There are concerns about the effects of a century of mining and related pollutants had on the creek, which runs from Empire Canyon north toward the Weber River, which is 16 miles from Park City.

It was scheduled as UPCM proposed an approximately \$1.2 million cleanup plan. The plan must clear a public-comment period and the open house was part of that process. UPCM has pledged the money to complete the cleanup.

According to the EPA, lead and arsenic are problematic in waste rock, soils and sediments and elevated levels of zinc and cadmium have been found in water samples.

Jim Christensen, the Denver-based EPA staffer who is handling the cleanup for the agency, said he had not received written comments in the period between the plan being released and the open house. He said the lack of comments is typical for such a project.

"I don't think many people will disagree with common-sense cleanup here, Christensen said.

The plan was chosen from several that were considered and it is near the midrange in price of the plans.

Christensen said he has no current intentions to alter the plan.

About 20 people attended the open house. Most were environmental regulators or had ties to UPCM's Flagstaff Mountain Resort, an upscale addition to Deer Valley that is planned in Empire Canyon.

Flagstaff will feature ski homes, condominiums and a hotel and its development was one of the EPA's reasons for the cleanup.

The canyon, frequently referred to as Daly Canyon, rises from Daly Avenue to the top reaches of Deer Valley and is where much of the city's historic silver mining occurred.

Kerry Gee, a vice president at UPCM, said people will be happy with the cleanup's results.

"It will be a lot greener than it is now a lot less rock exposed, Gee said.

He touts the project as the first cleanup in Park City that will significantly boost water quality.

The Empire Canyon cleanup will commence as early as the fall and could take two or three years to complete. UPCM intends to create a repository for the materials outside the Empire Canyon Day Lodge.

That, Gee said, will ensure that the materials are kept away from Park City neighborhoods.

"It's our intent to keep all the material on site. We don't want to be trucking (material) through Park City, Gee said, adding, "We certainly don't want a lot of trucks going down into Park City.